

Key Compact Principles for the Economic Downturn



Making the Compact work for you

For more information and advice:


www.compactvoice.org.uk

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Funding and Procurement Code


2.9 Government undertakes to provide whenever possible an opportunity for the voluntary and community sector to contribute to programme design.

If a public body is changing a programme in response to the downturn, they should involve the sector. It might be difficult to consult as well as usual, but they still need to do so. The benefits of this collaborative approach are clear.

 *Speak to them about possible changes before they happen and ask for assurance there will be a meaningful opportunity to contribute. Offer solutions and to work together.*


4.8 The Government undertakes to discuss risks up-front and place responsibility with the public sector body or voluntary and community organisation best able to manage them

In a downturn public bodies may be tempted to shift risks to the voluntary and community sector, or to not pay on time.

 *Don't think you have to accept the risks because otherwise you won't get the funding. Get out the compact and explain that there should be a conversation about the issue. Be firm about proper payment, monitor it closely and challenge it early.*

7.5 The sector undertakes to plan in good time for different situations to reduce any potential negative impact on both beneficiaries and the organisation.

The downturn is affecting many organisations in the sector, from increased beneficiaries to shifting needs to funding changes. Thinking through the likelihood of different scenarios and planning accordingly is vital.

 *Look at the planning tools available to help you such as on www.3s4.org.uk/how-to*

The Compact


The Compact is an agreement between public bodies and the Voluntary and Community Sector about how to work better together, creating mutual benefits which will help citizens and communities.

National and local Compacts

While this has been prepared using the national Compact and Codes, most local codes share many similar themes and commitments. Therefore this is a good reference point for using your local Compact.

7.6 Government undertakes to give enough notice of the end of grants or contracts. This should be a minimum of three months.

Even though times may be difficult for public bodies, they should still give sufficient notice at the end of grants or contracts to enable the programme to end smoothly and beneficiaries readied for the change.

 *Act quickly if this doesn't happen and be firm. Explain clearly the impact on beneficiaries and staff. Check your contract terms.*

Consultation Code

3.1 The Government undertakes to consult the sector on issues that are likely to affect it, particularly where Government is proposing new roles and responsibilities for the sector

Working with your Local Authority

Have a look at 'Backing Communities: Local Solutions – councils and voluntary and community organisations supporting people through the recession' by the LGA and NCVO for advice and practical ways to work with your Local Authority.

The downturn can't be used as an excuse not to consult properly. Ill-thought out consultation is likely to lead to further problems down the line.

Don't wait till the consultation is out. Ask what is happening and confirm it will be Compact compliant. Offer solutions and ways you can help.



Waverley – joint discussions on the economic crisis

Here is an example from the LGA/NCVO report: In Waverley, the local strategic partnership (LSP) has been working to ensure that voluntary sector organisations are involved in discussions on responding to the economic crisis. The partnership is working with Voluntary Action South West Surrey (VASWS) to keep third sector organisations in the area up to date.

Staff from the LSP, the council and the VCS have had discussions around where their priorities overlap and what potential there is for joint initiatives. Carol Dunnett, chief executive of VASWS, said: "Often you get the impression that statutory funders think the voluntary sector is a nuisance because we are always asking for funding, but here they are looking at us as part of the solution."


11.1 For written consultations, wherever possible 12 weeks should be allowed.

11.2 Where less than 12 weeks is allowed the document should specify the reason why a shorter response time has been set.

Community Code

3.2 The government promises to help create and maintain the conditions and support that help community groups to succeed.

Community groups and others that access key communities, such as BME groups, are sometimes seen as soft targets, as are grants. The Compact recognises their importance, the value they bring, and the preventative work they do.

 *Make sure you can demonstrate your importance, showing outcomes achieved with examples to provide colour.*